

GOVERNOR'S INTERAGENCY TRANSITION COUNCIL FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

2016 REPORT

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Submitted September 30, 2016

I. BACKGROUND

The Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (IATC) was first created on December 7, 2000 to improve the postsecondary outcomes of youths with disabilities in Maryland. It was reconstituted on August 7, 2007 by Executive Order 01.01.2007.13.

The primary responsibility of the IATC is to review, revise and update annually the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities to ensure effective interagency planning and delivery of services for secondary students with disabilities. Additionally, the IATC is tasked with identifying and reporting activities of each partner which impact the delivery, quality and availability of transition services. The IATC also serves in an advisory capacity to all transition-related federal grants.

The IATC met four times during the reporting period: October 8, 2015; January 13, 2016; April 13, 2016; and July 12, 2016.

State Agency Acronyms Used in this Report

- BHA – Behavioral Health Administration, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- DBM – Department of Budget and Management
- DDA – Developmental Disabilities Administration, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- DHMH – Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- DLLR – Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
- DORS – Division of Rehabilitation Services, Maryland State Department of Education
- GOC – Governor’s Office for Children
- GWDB – Governor’s Workforce Development Board
- MDOD – Maryland Department of Disabilities

- MHEC – Maryland Higher Education Commission
- MSDE – Maryland State Department of Education

II. SIGNIFICANT POLICY CHANGES

Workforce Investment Opportunities Act

The work of IATC partner agencies, particularly MSDE, DLLR, DHR, DHMH/DDA, DHMH/BHA, and GWDB, continues to be significantly impacted by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which went into effect July 1, 2015. The intention of this federal law was to improve employment outcomes for youth, particularly out-of-school youth (those who had left high school) and included a new emphasis on serving youth with disabilities.¹

WIOA places a priority on providing services to youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities ages 16 -24 who are not attending school are eligible for out-of-school services. Youth with disabilities up to age of 21 are eligible for in-school services if they are low-income or meet other eligibility criteria. WIOA also represents new opportunities for support for young job seekers with disabilities by increasing the responsibility of Workforce Investment Boards and American Job Centers to be fully accessible and offer necessary accommodations to provide job

¹ WIOA's Title I Youth Program funds, which are targeted at young adults classified as either "in-school" or "out-of-school," are intended to assist in career and educational development. These funds are allocated to states by the U.S. Department of Labor according to a formula. WIOA preserved many aspects of youth services previously provided under the Workforce Investment Act, but made key changes, including: increasing the amount of youth services funds that must be spent on out-of-school youth; expanding the age of eligibility for out-of-school services; making disability a core category for eligibility for all youth services; and expanding the required youth services program elements. Under WIOA, at least 75% of federally allocated Title I Youth Program funds now must be used for out-of-school youth, an increase from the 30% required under WIA. The types of services funded include training and youth development programs for young people who have left school, as well as after-school services and employment supports for young people still in school. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) now must spend at least 20% of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds on work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education.

seekers with disabilities effective and meaningful participation in the use of skills training and career development. Maryland state agencies continue to implement the new WIOA requirements.

Subminimum Wage Phase-Out in Maryland

In May 2016, Maryland passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (HB420), an advocate-driven law that phases out the use of “14(c) certificates,” which are certificates that allow sheltered workshops to pay workers with disabilities less than federal minimum wage (“subminimum wage”). Under HB420, over time, the 14(c) certificates authorizing this practice will no longer be issued, and sheltered workshops will not get reimbursements from the DDA for supported employment services provided to workers making subminimum wage. DDA and MDOD, in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders, will submit an Implementation Plan in October 2017 that includes plans for transitioning workers into competitive, integrated employment and other meaningful activities. Once this law has been fully implemented, youth with disabilities who are leaving high school will now be directed first towards competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

Maryland ABLE Program

The federal Achieving Better Life Experiences (ABLE) Act, signed into law in December 2014, allowed states to create programs to manage tax-exempt accounts for qualified people who acquired a disability prior to the age of 26. Assets kept in these accounts will not disqualify account beneficiaries from federally-funded benefits programs such as Medicaid or SSI. Maryland passed SB355 in April 2016, which directs Maryland 529 (formerly College Savings Plans of Maryland) to implement the Maryland ABLE Program. Maryland 529 will work with the Maryland Department of Disabilities on program development and outreach strategies, and has added a seat for the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities to the Maryland 529 Board of Directors. The Maryland ABLE Program is expected to be operational by October 2017.

III. GRANT AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PROMISE

Maryland was one of six recipients of a national research grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Additional federal partners include the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor and Department of Health and Human Services. Maryland was awarded 31 million dollars for the five year grant in 2013. Over 2,000 youth on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families have been recruited, 996 of whom were randomly assigned to receive intensive interventions to increase the educational and employment outcomes of both the youth and their families. Key interventions include coordinated, assertive community-based case management, benefits counseling and financial education, and unpaid and paid work experiences for the youth. Over 160 Maryland PROMISE youth participated in paid employment experiences during summer 2016. PROMISE staff also engaged 1,130 in direct employer engagement activities and provided youth and their families with 140 unpaid work experiences.

Evidence-Based Behavioral Health Programs

BHA began administration of Healthy Transitions (HT) in October 2014. HT continues as a program for youth ages 16-25 with serious mental health conditions. [1] The goal of the initiative is to create seamless transition for participants moving from youth to adult services. Services include intensive treatment, community interventions, and family supports. Qualitative and quantitative data is collected. The grant covers Howard County and the tri-county region of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. The HT service providers are Humanim in partnership with Way Station (Howard County) and Pathways (Tri-county). Maryland Healthy Transitions - MD HT served 92 individuals to date with 25 referrals and is on target to provide service to 140 by the end of September. MD-HT provided Outreach and Education to 4,926 individuals through over 150 events.

BHA continues to participate in the work to conduct a feasibility study for the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). BHA works with

researchers on adaptations to the model and fidelity tool for Supported Employment in Maryland for use with Transition -Age Youth and Maryland has entered into enrollment and development phase of this research.

IV. INTERAGENCY STATE PLAN FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES: GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Interagency State Plan underwent annual review and revisions were approved during the July 12, 2016 meeting. The three major goals comprising the strategic plan are:

1. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school prepared for employment.
2. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.
3. Every student with a disability and their family will have information and support to successfully navigate the transition process.

The following pages contain descriptions of the strategies that were implemented to support these goals, and the progress IATC partner agencies have made in reaching these goals.

EMPLOYMENT

GOAL *Every student with a disability will exit school prepared for employment*

STRATEGIES

- Students will have support for and access to exploration of employment before leaving high school.
- Each student will leave school equipped with basic knowledge of their own job skills, what it takes to get a job, and what resources are available to help with job training and placement.

PROGRESS

- **Supported Employment and Competitive Employment.**
During the reporting period, 9,049 consumers ages 14-22 received services through DORS; 828 consumers attained competitive employment.
In FY2016, BHA provided 298 transition-age youth with Supported Employment services.
DDA served 601 transition-age youth through the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative in FY2016. DDA, administered the funds to provider agencies to support these Transitioning youth in Supported Employment, Community Learning Services, Day Habilitation and Discovery and Customization services. There were also a number of transitioning students and their families who chose to individualize their services through self-directed services.
- **QUEST Internship Program.** The QUEST Internship Program, a partnership of DORS, DBM and participating State agencies, affords State agencies the opportunity to provide mentoring services for persons with disabilities through unpaid part-time or full-time internships. In the past year, 46 individuals (5 of whom were ages 14-22) have participated in the QUEST Internship Program.
- **Summer Employment.** Approximately 256 youth served by DORS participated in Summer Employment programs in FY2015. Additionally, In the summer of 2016, the Local Workforce Development Boards utilized the Summer Youth Connection and Youthworks grants to provide summer employment to 120 youth with disabilities. These

were paid work experiences in competitive integrated settings and were provided to youth between the ages of 14-24. These opportunities also provided job readiness training and employment for 20-30 hours per week over a 5 to 6 week time period.

- **Project Search Expansion.** Project Search, a business-led school-to-work program for students with significant disabilities takes place entirely at the workplace. There are nine programs currently operating in Maryland.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

GOAL *Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.*

STRATEGIES

- Students interested in pursuing postsecondary opportunities will have access to activities that support this goal.
- Students and their families will be provided with information on postsecondary education and training program opportunities and requirements.

PROGRESS

- **Graduation Rates.** According to the Maryland Report Card, 4.73% of students with IEPs left school before graduating, compared with 2.60% of students without IEPs. According to MD Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data & Related Tables, on October 1, 2015, there were 4,596 students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting with a diploma (43.4%) and 799 students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting school with a certificate of program completion (7.6%).
- **Career and Technology Education.** In the Class of 2015, 97.56% of the students with a disability that were Career Technology and Education concentrators graduated high school.

- **Postsecondary Supports.** DORS supported 784 students ages 14-22 in postsecondary education: 294 in College/University, 383 in Vocational and Occupational Skills Training; and 87 in Workforce Technology Center trainings.
- **DORS Pathways Program Expansion.** The DORS Pathways Program, an educational support program for students in postsecondary education with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, is available at all three Community College of Baltimore County sites, Howard Community College and Montgomery College.
- **The Task Force to Study the Impact of Expanding Credit and Non-credit Courses for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities,** chaired by MHEC and composed in part of several IATC members, submitted its study of postsecondary options for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities at the end of 2015.

TRANSITION PROCESS

GOAL *Every student with a disability and their family will have information and supports to successfully navigate the transition process.*

STRATEGIES

- Families of students eligible for services from adult agencies will have the opportunity to participate in transition education by age 14 and will have information and knowledge about agencies which support adults with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities and their families will receive information on transitioning to adult health care services.
- Every student with a disability will exit school prepared to integrate into the community.

PROGRESS

- **Updated Transitioning Youth Handbook.** The Transition Planning Guide is in the process of being revised. The updated version is expected by December, 2016. Content includes information on eligibility requirements for adult services and transition planning strategies and resources.

- **Transitioning Youth Conference.** The 2016 Maryland Professional Transition Institute, organized and hosted by the IATC, was held in March 2016 in Catonsville, MD. The conference, which was attended by over 200 professionals and advocates who work with transitioning youth, included interactive sessions covering transition planning, employment, postsecondary education, healthcare and supported decision-making.
- **Addressing Service Gaps.** GOC is taking the lead in working with IATC partner agencies to support Governor Hogan's goal of an economically secure Maryland by improving outcomes among disconnected youth ages 16-24 who are not working and not enrolled in school. Youth with disabilities are often disconnected and struggle to enter the adult workforce due to multiple systemic and individual barriers. As a member, GOC informs and supports the work of the IATC by providing analysis of State policies that impact youth disconnection, identifying gaps in services, and providing information on promising strategies for re-connection.
- **TAY Behavioral Health Care.** Core Service Agency (local mental health authority) representatives from 12 local jurisdictions with state grant-funded Transition Age Youth (TAY)-specific programs met together on June 14th for a policy forum to align local implementation with state-level model and policy development in order to address broader systemic and financing issues necessary for sustainability and expansion of the TAY initiative statewide. Funding of the TAY initiative continues into FY 2017.
- **Early Intervention Program.** The Maryland Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a specialized program with expertise in the early identification, evaluation, and comprehensive psychiatric treatment of adolescents and young adults with psychotic disorders. The EIP is comprised of three components: (1) Outreach and Education Services; (2) Clinical Services; and (3) Training and Implementation Support. Research is integrated into each of these components and focuses on the development of objective methods for early detection and prediction of disease emergence, progress or recovery; and intervention development to enhance efficacy and effectiveness. All EIP activities are guided by a multi-disciplinary Advisory Council, including youth, family and consumer advocacy. Outreach and education activities were conducted at 33 events for over 3,260 attendees. Services were provided to 111 individuals, and 80 consultations were provided.

V. LIST OF IATC MEMBERS

The membership of the IATC is provided for in Executive Order 01.01.2007.13. As of September 30, 2016, the membership of the IATC was:

Co-Chair: Carol A. Beatty, Secretary of Disabilities

Co-Chair: Suzanne R. Page, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services

Appointed by Governor to 3-year terms (terms expire 2016)

- Joanna Falcone
- Shelly Allred
- Jeanne Gilligan Furman
- Catherine E. Lyle
- Dr. Linda Schnapp, Ph.D.
- Sarah Sorensen

Student representative appointed by Governor

- one vacancy

Representing State Dept. of Education

- Suzanne R. Page, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services
- Paul E. Dunford, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Special Education & Early Intervention Services
- Mary L. O'Connor, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Career & College Readiness
- Walter Sallee, interim designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Student & School Services
- Adele W. Connolly
- Joyce Serio
- Christy Stuart

Representing Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene

- Judith Pattik, designee of Deputy Secretary for Developmental Disabilities
- Mona M. Figueroa, designee of Executive Director, Behavioral Health Administration.

Representing Dept. of Human Resources

- Steven Youngblood, interim designee

Representing Dept. of Juvenile Services

- LaSandra T. Diggs

Representing Dept. of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation

- Michael R. DiGiacomo
- Carolynnnette Scott

Representing Maryland Commission on Disabilities

- one vacancy

Representing Maryland Higher Education Commission

- Glennis Daniels-Bacchus
- Emily Dow

Representing Maryland Technology Assistance Program

- James D. McCarthy

Ex officio

- Carol A. Beatty, Secretary of Disabilities
- Karen Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools
- Christina E. Drushel, designee of Executive Director, Governor's Office for Children.

Staff: Anne Blackfield, Director of Interagency Affairs

c/o Maryland Department of Disabilities

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